

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Commission on Faith and Order

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

January 18 - 25, 1954

However much we desire to see growing evidence of the unity of the Church of Christ, we can expect very little if we do not pray fervently. Especially during these eight days should we join with Christians of many confessions and tongues in beseeching God to remove the barriers which separate His people from one another.

It is appropriate that all who take active interest in the work of the World Council of Churches should observe this octave of prayer. Let the burden of our prayers be that each function of the World Council's various departments shall be blessed and guided by God to serve the cause of unity. Particularly let us pray for the work of the Faith and Order Commission, and for all preparations being made for the Second Assembly to be held in August, 1954.

The litany, intentions and prayers may be used for private or corporate devotion. They may be reproduced in any form, and translated into various languages, so that as many Christians as possible will pray for the manifestation of our given unity in Jesus Christ, the Hope of the world.

PRAYERS

Eternal and merciful God, who art the God of peace and not of discord : have mercy upon thy Church, divided in thy service ; and grant that we, seeking unity in Christ, and in the truth of thy holy Word, with one mind and one mouth may glorify thee, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

(LANCELOT ANDREWES)

O Lord Jesus Christ, who didst say to thine apostles, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ; regard not our sins, but the faith of thy Church, and grant it that peace and unity which are agreeable to thy will ; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

Amen.

(ROMAN MISSAL)

LITANY FOR UNITY

Almighty God, who didst make with us the New Covenant and said, I will be their God and they shall be my people,

Forgive and heal our divisions.

Merciful God, who didst name Thy Son Jesus, that He should save His people from their sins,

Forgive and heal our divisions.

Lord Jesus Christ, who didst promise that where two or three are gathered in Thy name, Thou art in their midst,

Unite us in Thy truth.

Son of the Living God, who didst assure Thine apostle that the gates of hell shall not prevail against Thy Church.

Unite us in Thy truth.

Good Shepherd, who wilt gather all Thy chosen sheep in one fold, so there will be one flock,

Unite us in Thy truth.

Lamb of God, who didst give Thyself for the Church and make it one Body in the Baptism of the one Spirit,

Unite us in Thy truth.

Bread of Life, who didst give the one Loaf and the one Cup for the nourishment of the Church which is Thy Body,

Unite us in Thy truth.

Spirit of God, who dost bestow diversities of gifts upon Thy people for the edification of all,

Maintain our unity in the bond of peace.

Holy Spirit, who dost help our weakness of prayer and make intercession for us,

Maintain our unity in the bond of peace.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God everlasting, forgive and heal our divisions, unite us in Thy truth, maintain our unity in the bond of peace.

Amen.

DAILY INTENTIONS OF PRAYER

- January 18* : For sincere penitence because of our perpetuation of divisions, and for wisdom and honesty to prevent penitence from being self-delusion.
- January 19* : For the guidance of all persons working for the expression of Christian unity, and especially for those pursuing studies on problems of Faith and Order.
- January 20* : For the change of attitude of all enemies of Christian unity, whether active opponents of the Ecumenical Movement, or passive supporters of existing divisions.
- January 21* : For the realization of unity in truth by all those engaged in negotiations for the union of separated churches.
- January 22* : For the strengthening of Christians living under conditions of tyranny, oppression, or natural disasters, and the preservation of their experiences of unity.
- January 23* : For the chastening and enlightening of churches which are too comfortable in the world to be concerned about disunity.
- January 24* : For the encouragement of all churches to find unity in their witness to the Gospel, and to make Christ's love known to people outside the Church.
- January 25* : For the clearer understanding and deeper faith of all Christians in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and in the hope for the coming of God's Kingdom in perfect unity.